



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Resources and Development Committee considers amending Title 26

**TSE BONITO, N.M.** – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0183-16, which seeks to amend Title 26 section 1002 by adding a provision stating that no chapter meetings shall be held during a regularly scheduled Naabik'iyáti' Committee meeting or during Navajo Nation Council sessions.

Pursuant to Navajo Nation Code Title II, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee shall meet at least once per month at the call of the chairperson on the second and fourth Thursday of each month until such time as the Committee adopts an annual meeting schedule. Additionally, Navajo Nation Council sessions shall commence at 10:00 a.m. on the fourth Monday of January, the third Monday of April, July, and October of each year.

RDC member Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa), who sponsored the legislation, emphasized that the amendment will help restore accountability and trust of delegates.

“As delegates, we are constantly criticized for not being at planning or regular chapter meetings because we have standing committee meetings or council sessions. Majority of Council Delegates have more than three chapters and chapters schedule meetings on committee meeting dates or all the chapters schedule all their meetings on the same day. It is important for delegates to be present at the chapter meetings so the needs and issues can be addressed at the Council level,” stated Delegate Filfred.

RDC member Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) questioned if the duties and responsibilities of delegates includes having the authority to amend Title 26.

“Does this amendment correlate with Title II? This amendment will address our authority over local governance. Are we going to be the umbrella over the chapter governments?” asked Delegate Perry.

The legislation includes supporting, opposing, and inclusive comments that were submitted during the five-day comment period.

“The comments submitted during the five-day comment period point out some important points. The comments question if Council has authority to amend Title 26 or do the chapters have to

have majority support to amend the title? Or does it have to be amended through referendum vote?" questioned RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat).

According to Navajo Nation Department of Justice Attorney Lorenzo Curley, to make any amendments to Title 26, the majority of chapters must support the change by resolution or done through referendum vote. Title 26 is considered to be organic law, laws that form the foundation of a government.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd recommended for NNDOJ, Office of Legislative Counsel, and Office of Navajo Government Development to provide direction to address the issue of amending Title 26.

The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0183-16 with a 3-1 vote. Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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